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SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

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TAGS: [TBIO](#) [ECON](#) [PREL](#) [SOCI](#) [EG](#) [WHO](#) [KSTH](#)

SUBJECT: CAIRO AIWG REVIEWS MISSION AND GOE PREPAREDNESS

REF: A. CAIRO 08497

- [B](#). CAIRO 08533
- [C](#). CAIRO 08734
- [D](#). CAIRO 08878
- [E](#). CAIRO 09208
- [F](#). CAIRO 09351

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[1](#). (U) Summary: The Cairo Avian Influenza Working Group (AIWG) met January 12, 2006, to assess mission preparedness, review its tripwires, and evaluate recent interactions with the Government of Egypt (GOE) on avian influenza (AI) preparedness and other related issues. End summary.

[2](#). (SBU) NAMRU-3 confirms that no H5N1 has been detected in Egypt, although recent problems with importation of regional flu samples (see reftel F) have impaired NAMRU-3's surveillance and detection activities. In addition, FAS reports that, although a blocked feather meal shipment has been let in, the blanket poultry ban remains in place, despite the fact that the U.S. has no high-path AI and a strong program of surveillance (see reftel C). The Ambassador will meet with the new Minister of Health January 23 to address these issues.

[3](#). (U) The U.S. continues to provide assistance to Egypt for AI detection and response. USAID may provide \$1.5 million in assistance to the GOE for long-term development. USAID has provided training through APHIS in the U.S. for foreign veterinary workers, including four people from the Middle East (two of them from Egypt).

[4](#). (SBU) However, there continue to be questions concerning the GOE's ability to respond effectively to an AI outbreak. To date, no GOE preparedness plan has been published, although interministerial meetings on AI have taken place, and a draft national preparedness plan was circulated. Local AI reporting has focused on events in other regions. However, the GOE has not announced any planning in the event of a possible AI outbreak in Egypt. Al-Ahram newspaper reports that the Ministry of Health and Population (MOHP) now requires intensive inspection measures at all airports and ports of entry for visitors and cargo from Turkey, with immediate notification of the MOHP and quarantine of suspected cases.

[5](#). (SBU) Post conducted a review of tripwires vis--vis the Turkey outbreak, and will amplify the plan by creating two sets of tripwires to distinguish between avian flu and human-to-human contagion. Although post has communicated a great deal of information on AI to the Mission community, a warden message will be issued to stress the need for AmCit preparedness in the event of an AI outbreak in Egypt. PA and CONS report that there have been no press/AmCit inquiries regarding AI.

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